



Voting Information News

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Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

- ✓ Have an adequate supply of voting materials on hand for year-round registration, absentee ballot requests, and change of address for members moving or changing assignment location and new comers in the organization.
- ✓ Encourage those you assist to keep their voting files active and up-to-date to avoid last minute rush by submitting an FPCA. Consult the 2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide for state-by-state guidelines (also available at www.fvap.gov).
- ✓ Post notices on bulletin boards and in high-traffic areas motivating people to start early in 2005. Include a contact name and telephone number on the notice, so interested citizens will know how to obtain additional information or materials.

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

It's a Matter of Opinion... Yours!

Your opinion of the absentee voting process provides valuable information. The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* requires the FVAP to provide a report to the President and Congress on the effectiveness of assistance provided to covered citizens. This report, derived from the data collected through the FVAP 2004 Post Election Survey, must include a statistical analysis of voter participation and a description of Federal-State cooperation and must be submitted not later than the end of the year after a Presidential election. The survey will also be used by the FVAP to identify areas where the absentee voting process or voting assistance can be improved. Participation in the survey is strictly voluntary and anonymous.

The survey includes questions on individuals' experiences in registering and voting during the 2004 election year. It is an essential tool in evaluating the level of assistance provided, identifying potential problems in the absentee voting process and determining trends in voting participation by the target populations.

Survey participants were selected on a statistically random sample basis from five demographics: members of the U.S. military, federally-employed civilians residing outside the U.S., citizens outside the U.S. with no U.S. Government affiliation, unit voting assistance officers (VAO), and local election officials.

During the week of November 1, 2004, the 2004 Post-election Surveys were mailed to these five populations. Also, all Department of State VAOs were sent a survey by email.

Although participants who have received the paper version of the survey have the option of filling it out and returning it by mail, we strongly urge the use of the electronic version of the survey because it takes less time to complete. The website access information and an access code to log on to the website is provided on the survey mailed to the five populations indicated above.

Sirota Consulting LLC, a New York-based survey research firm, is conducting the survey for FVAP along with their subcontractor Pearson NCS. Results of the survey are used by FVAP to encourage amendments to state laws and procedures to facilitate absentee voting, to make improvements in existing voting assistance services and to develop new avenues of voting assistance. Only people involved in collecting or preparing the information for analysis will have access to completed questionnaires and only group statistics will be reported.

In the past, survey feedback has helped the FVAP make progress on your behalf in areas such as:

- Helping to provide round trip ballot transit time of 45 days or more;
- Elimination of notary requirements;
- Allowing for electronic transmission (faxing) of election materials;
- Making improvements in existing voter assistance services such as implementation of the DoD Voting Information Center; and
- Developing and utilizing information systems such as the World Wide Web to access voting information.

If you have received a questionnaire regarding your voting experience in 2004, please take a few minutes to complete and promptly return it, following the instructions included. If you have not, but would like to share your voting-related experiences with the FVAP, please feel free to submit your comments via email to vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

Heads of DoD components and the Uniformed Services shall assist with the survey in accordance with DoD Directive 1000.4.

This is an opportunity to voice your opinion and will further facilitate absentee voting for military and overseas citizens. (See November 9, 2004 News Release #24 at www.fvap.gov) ☒

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

- ✓ Make sure the installation or Embassy/Consulate operator knows to refer callers requesting voting assistance to you.
- ✓ Prepare your replacement (if applicable) or assistants with the tools and training to ensure continuity of your voting assistance program. Provide them with a copy of the FVAP E-Learning CD ROM to begin self-training.
- ✓ Prepare or update your continuity folder.
- ✓ Now is a good time to prepare your reports before the holidays. Browse through the FVAP website (www.fvap.gov) and your continuity file to help you recall the topics for your after action report, best practices and lessons learned. (Guidance for submitting best practices is available in *Chapter 2 of the 2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide*.)
- ✓ Again this month we are reminding you to include in reports to your superiors your voting assistance efforts – to include number of potential voters you assisted, number of voting materials you distributed and any other activities such as workshops, registration drives, Armed Forces Voters week, Absentee Voters Week, that you coordinated. ☑

Don't stop now! Your Voting Assistance Program Continues...



Reports: Although the 2004 elections are behind us, your voting assistance program continues. Now is an excellent time to gather your thoughts and materials to prepare an after action report for your reporting organization. It has been a year of many voting outreach activities and your dedication and efforts should not go unnoticed.

Your efforts may be reflected in your appraisal (military personnel) but submitting your after action report and sharing lessons learned and best practices with other VAOs are key to improving the absentee voting process. You may have had to build your program with no continuity folder or without local assistance. FVAP appreciates the work you have done; not only the assistance provided to U.S. citizens but also for your efforts in building your voting assistance program. Don't let your efforts fall to the wayside. Prepare your reports so that they portray a voting assistance program with the credit it deserves. Your report will help in the continued success of your program locally and the Federal Voting Assistance Program in general.

Continuity File: Continuity of your program is of the utmost importance and not only because it is an item on your appraisal checklist (military personnel). If you are going on leave or transferring to a new assignment make sure you update your continuity folder. Within the Uniformed Services, Federal agencies, Embassies/Consulates, and international organizations and corporations new Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) are appointed frequently. Many times these new VAOs are unfamiliar with their duties and responsibilities. If you are continuing as a VAO, a continuity file contains vital reference in the performance of your duties. For this reason, the FVAP stresses the importance of developing and/or maintaining a voting continuity file that can be used year after year and passed on to your successor.

The continuity file should contain basic details on absentee voting procedures; key election materials, emails, copies of this newsletter, news releases, websites and any material that may help your successor perform effectively. The continuity file should also provide the VAO with an orientation of his or her voting responsibilities, duties in helping to meet the organization's absentee

voting needs, and local procedures to order election materials. Make sure you include a copy of your after action report, best practices and lessons learned. See your installation VAO or Service Voting Action Officer for guidance. Chapter 2 of the Voting Assistance Guide provides guidance for submitting best practices. You may also email the FVAP directly.

Voting Assistance: In off-election years VAOs continue to provide assistance. There are many state and local elections being held. Although not as frequent as during election years, throughout the year you will be assisting voters to register, request absentee ballots and to submit change of address for those citizens that have moved and new arrivals to your organization. You should continue to announce your voting assistance program. If not adequately announced, members in the organization will not know there is a voting assistance program or a VAO available.

The main duty of a VAO is to obtain and distribute voting related materials and to provide assistance to all of the citizens that they are appointed to help. The VAO helps ensure that these citizens understand how to vote absentee and what their voting rights are under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

The voting materials should be available through normal supply distribution channels. If you are having trouble obtaining these materials, please contact your Service Voting Action Officer for further assistance (contact information listed on page 3).

You are not alone. Your installation VAO, your Service Voting Action Officer and FVAP will continue to provide assistance throughout off-election years as well. ☑

NOTE to overseas citizens on the Post Election Survey: Survey forms are distributed at random to overseas citizens registered with their local Embassy/Consulate. Therefore, you must be registered with your local Embassy/Consulate in order to have the possibility of receiving a survey instrument. Contact your local embassy/consulate (see list at www.state.gov) for more information. If you do not receive a survey, you may submit your comments/suggestions for improving the absentee voting process directly to FVAP by email at: vote@fvap.ncr.gov.



The Guide, Federal Forms and the Website - an Overview

Voting Assistance Guide (VAG) - The primary source of information for a VAO containing valuable, detailed information on how to carry out your duties as a VAO along with state-by-state (and territory) instructions and guidelines for voting absentee. The VAG is available at www.fvap.gov.

Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF-76) - The form is accepted by all states and territories as a simultaneous request for registration and/or an absentee ballot. The online FPCA is accepted by all the states and territories accept American Samoa and Guam. When completing the FPCA, procedures contained in the VAG should be followed closely as an incomplete or incorrect FPCA could result in disenfranchisement.

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB, SF-186) - The form is a back up or emergency ballot used for general election and is available online (OFWAB). Military personnel and their voting age dependants both in the United States and overseas, and U.S. citizens overseas (including APO/FPO addresses) who are absent from their place of residence where they are otherwise qualified to vote during the general election, can vote using the FWAB.

The FWAB is voted if they have not received the requested regular absentee ballot from their state after having applied for it early enough so that the application was received at least 30 days before the general election or, before the deadline established by the state, whichever is later. The voter can write in the names of candidates or party preference for each Federal office on the ballot. Some states have expanded the use of the FWAB. See the VAG for State-by-State instructions.

FVAP Website: www.fvap.gov - The site provides an overview of the FVAP as well as electronic access to

many of the materials and all publications provided by the FVAP. In addition, it contains links to state government homepages and other sites with election information. The website is updated on a regular basis to provide the most current information and news for UOCAVA citizens, VAOs, state election officials, and organizations that provide support to UOCAVA citizens. The web site also contains information on all FVAP initiatives, e.g., Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign, the Ombudsman Service, Electronic Transmission (faxing) System, and the State Legislative Initiatives Program.

VAO training and all FVAP publications, including the online FPCA (OFPCA) and the online FWAB (OFWAB) can be viewed or downloaded on the web site. There are links to state election web sites for current voting and candidate information. Service voting web sites, Federal agency links and links to overseas citizen organizations are also provided. ☒

**U.S. Consulate General
Voting Event
Cape Town, South Africa**



On October 19, 2004 U.S. citizens in Cape Town had an opportunity to deposit their completed absentee ballots in a special collection bag that would be sent via UPS Courier service to the United States. Consular officers and staff were on hand to provide notarization when required and, together with Public Affairs Section staff, date stamped the ballot return envelopes just prior to being dropped into the special collection bag. A total of 230 ballots were deposited during the event. ☒

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **E-mail:** markeyjd@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Linda Hoover, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **E-mail:** hooverlr@state.gov

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. James Davis **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532
DSN fax: 221-4532; **E-mail:** davisj@hoffman.army.mil,
<http://www.vote.army.mil> or <https://www.vote.army.mil>

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LT Bill Danzi **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672); **DSN:** 882-4606, **fax:** (901) 874-2054,
DSN fax: 882-2054; **E-mail:** MILL_navyvote@navy.mil, <http://www.persnet.navy.mil/nvap>

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Lt. Col. Lee Shick **tel:** (210) 565-2338 (Mr. John Lowrance), **toll free:** 1-866-229-7074 (select option 4, then 6 from menu), **DSN:** 665-4369; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;
E-mail: afpc/dpsfvotingpgmdlist@randolph.af.mil;

U.S. Marine Corps: GySgt Kenneth B. Warford **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511; **fax:** (703) 784-9827,
DSN fax: 278-9827; **E-mail:** kenneth.warford@usmc.mil
https://lnweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/mrp/Voting+Home

U.S. Coast Guard: YNCS Lori McNaught **tel:** (202)-267-1636, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;
E-mail: LMcNaught@comdt.uscg.mil, http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP Website.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

PHONE:
(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

FAX
(703) 588-8438, DSN 425

VOTING INFORMATION
CENTER:
(703) 588-1343
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE:
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

*Visit our website for
international toll-free phone
and fax numbers.*

E-MAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

For any comments or
suggestions on this newsletter
please send us an email.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

Changes From The States

North Carolina: New address for: Wayne County, 209 South William Street, Goldsboro, NC 27530

Please refer to the FVAP website for the most current information and update your *2004-05 Voting Assistance guide*. ☑



Thank You and Happy Holidays!

With the 2004 General election behind us, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to all the people who helped make it possible for the military and overseas citizens to vote in the Primary, Special, Runoff and General elections which took place this year.

We thank the Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) worldwide, for providing information and assistance and distributing voting materials. In the Uniformed Services and merchant marine, VAOs assisted their fellow personnel as well as their family members. Many other *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* citizens were assisted through Embassies, Consulates, overseas U.S. citizen organi-

NOTE to all VAOs: The VIN provides monthly information on its products and services for guidance and reference in carrying out your voting assistance program. Be sure to put a copy of this newsletter in your voting continuity file as you receive it. If you have additional questions or comments about the absentee voting process, please contact your Installation VAO, your Service Voting Action Officer or the FVAP directly.

zations and corporations who dedicated time to distributing Federal Post Card Applications, holding voting workshops and registration drives. Many international English-language media assisted citizens in voting absentee in this election year by publishing election dates, contact information and other pertinent U.S. election news.

And, as always, we thank the thousands of State and Local Election Officials nationwide for their extraordinary cooperation and professional assistance to UOCAVA citizens and the FVAP.

Thank you again for all of your efforts which helped to get out the vote and ensure that the UOCAVA citizens who are away from home were able to exercise their right to vote. ☑

Federal Voting Assistance Program
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1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155



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